



**Henry Ford Health System
Testimony**

March 9, 2010

**House Health Policy Committee
RE: Katie's Bill (S.B. 1172)**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony this morning. My name is Joyce Young. I am vice president and chief nursing officer at Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital. I also serve as president for the Michigan Organization of Nurse Executives, an organization which promotes proactive nursing policies and works with agencies such as the licensing and community colleges and university nursing programs. Today I am offering comments on behalf of *Katie Vigor, a young nursing graduate who tragically died of an aggressive brain tumor prior to her ability to take state licensure boards and fulfill her life-long dream of becoming a RN.*

Katie graduated from Henry Ford Community college in May. During her nursing program she worked as a nurse extern for HFWH. Upon graduation she was hired into a nurse intern position and enthusiastically began preparing to take her board exams for licensure. She never got that chance.... In August she was diagnosed with an aggressive glioblastoma (brain cancer) and given only a short time to live.

Nursing meant the world to Katie and even after this devastating diagnosis; she wanted nothing more than to receive her nursing license. Sadly, her condition was so devastating that she went very quickly right into Hospice care, and in her very weakened condition was confined to a hospital bed in the living room of her parent's home.

One of her instructors from HFCC (Cathy Wakefield) started a campaign to get Katie an honorary nursing license. Presently the MI state board of nursing licensure has no mechanism for such honorary acts, and no precedent exists. I am so appreciative of Senator Basham who, backed this effort; and in the essence of time (perhaps only weeks or less of Katie's life), went so far as to present Katie and her family with a framed certificate honoring her time, vigor, knowledge and enthusiasm. Thank you also to Representative Corriveau who has supported the efforts. Additionally, at about that time a Facebook page was started "Give Katie her honorary nursing license" – and attracted the attention and support of thousands!

Passing Katie's Bill would mean that in the future if something devastating happened, such as what Katie faced with her terminal diagnosis, to any other student who otherwise had completed all required courses – they could receive honorary licensure. Nursing is a profession, some say a calling, in which we give of ourselves in the service to others. This bill would, in the most critical of times... give back to nursing.

I ask this Committee to support and pass Katie's bill. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.